

**REMARKS**

At the outset, Applicants thank the Examiner for reviewing and considering the present application. The Office Action dated March 12, 2007 has been received and reviewed.

Claims 1 and 8 are hereby amended. Claim 7 is hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-6 and 8-11 are currently pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 7 is cancelled, hence the rejection of that claim is moot. Applicants traverse the rejection of the remaining claims.

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner asserts that the specification fails to expressly support the following limitations: “a master function being provided only to the first home appliance” and “a communication line path for communication only between the first home appliance and at least one of the second home appliances.”

Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants submit that support for such claimed features may be found, for example, in Figures 1-2 and the corresponding written description. Nevertheless, Applicants have amended this recitation to further clarify the claim language. Support for the claim clarification can be found on at least page 5 of Applicants’ specification. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph rejection.

With respect to claim 3, the Examiner asserts that claim 3 calls for an application layer that produces a command code and a factor code from packet data of a received message. In addition, the Examiner suggests changing this limitation to call for “an application layer

producing a command code and a factor code and analyzing a return packet.” *See Office Action* at page 2.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Claim 3 recites, *inter alia*, that the master function includes, *inter alia*, “an application layer producing a command code and a factor code from packet data of a message and analyzing a return packet.” Applicants submit that support for claim 3 can be found in Applicants’ specification. For example, Applicants’ specification at line 20 of page 5 describes the master function and states that the application layer “performs functions of processing input data from a user interface (UI), producing a command code.” In addition, Applicants’ specification at lines 8-9 states that the “body [of a packet] is constituted with messages, which are control orders set in the application layer.” Further, Applicants’ specification at line 15 of page 7 describes the constitution of a message. In particular, Applicants’ specification states that the “message is the information required when a master controls or monitors a slave or when the slave returns a command execution result to the master” and “the packet message demanded [e.g., and consequently received] by the master is constituted with a “command code” showing a command from the master to the slave and a ‘factor’ showing arguments required for the slave to perform the command.” *See also Figure 6 of Applicants’ specification*. Thus, as the recitations of claim 3 are supported by Applicants’ specification, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph rejection.

With respect to claim 8, the Examiner asserts that the specification fails to expressly support the following limitation: “wherein the second home appliance is not configured to transmit control commands to the first appliance.”

Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants submit that support for such claimed features can be found in the paragraph beginning on line 23 of page 4. In particular, Applicants’

specification states that “the second home appliance having the slave function *only* carries out the command and returns the execution result of the command to the first home appliance *without issuing any order*” (emphasis added). Further support can be found in the paragraph beginning on line 10 of page 6, which describes, *inter alia*, the slave’s configuration and functionality.

Furthermore, Applicants submit that the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph rejection of claims 2, 4-7, and 9-10 should be withdrawn for respectively depending indirectly or directly upon claims 1 and 8, which are supported by the Applicants’ specification, as discussed above.

Claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,838,226, issued to *Hougy et al.* (hereinafter *Hougy*). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 recites a system comprising, *inter alia*, “a communication line path for communication to the next second home appliance only after transmitting at least one packet to the second home appliance and receiving a reply of the at least one packet from the second home appliance.” *Hougy* fails to disclose at least these claimed features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the applied reference and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claim 6, which depends from claim 1, is also patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,922,050, issued to *Madany*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 recites a system comprising, *inter alia*, “a communication line path for communication to the next second home appliance only after transmitting at least one packet to

the second home appliance and receiving a reply of the at least one packet from the second home appliance.” *Madany* fails to disclose at least these claimed features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claim 2, which depends from claim 1, is also patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

Claims 3-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Madany* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,101,191, issued to *MacFayden et al.* (hereinafter *MacFayden*) and U.S. Patent No. 5,008,879, issued to *Fischer et al.* (hereinafter *Fischer*). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 3-5 are patentable for at least depending upon claim 1, which Applicants have shown to be allowable and which recites a system comprising, *inter alia*, “a communication line path for communication to the next second home appliance only after transmitting at least one packet to the second home appliance and receiving a reply of the at least one packet from the second home appliance.” As discussed above, *Madany* fails to disclose these features. In addition, *MacFayden* and *Fischer*, taken singularly or in combination, fail to cure the aforementioned deficiencies.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claims 3-5, which depend from claim 1, are also patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Madany* in view of *MacFayden*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 7 has been canceled, and the rejection is moot. Nevertheless, as the subject matter of claim 7 has been substantially incorporated into claim 1, Applicants will address the proposed combination of *Madany* and *MacFayden* with respect to claim 1.

Turning to claim 1, Applicants submit that *Madany* and *MacFayden*, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least a system comprising, *inter alia*, “a communication line path for communication to the next second home appliance only after transmitting at least one packet to the second home appliance and receiving a reply of the at least one packet from the second home appliance.”

Applicants traverse the Examiner’s assertions that such features are disclosed in column 2 or column 3 of *MacFayden*. See *Office Action* at page 15. In column 3, *MacFayden* discloses that “the receiving appliance can then acknowledge to the sending appliance the receipt of a packet without error” and “if an acknowledgement is not received within a specified period of time, the data packet is retransmitted, and the process is repeated.” See *MacFayden* at column 3, lines 52-56. However, *MacFayden* does not disclose communicating to the next second home appliance only after transmitting at least one packet to the second appliance and receiving a reply of the at least one packet from the second home appliance. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Fischer* in view of *Madany*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 8 recites a method comprising, *inter alia*, “having the first home appliance perform processes of checking whether the second packet is received, and transmitting the next packet or re-transmitting the first packet according to a result obtained from said checking, wherein the first home appliance is configured to start communication with a next second home appliance

only after transmitting the first packet to the second home appliance and receiving the second packet from the second home appliance.” Applicants submit that *Fischer* fails to disclose at least these features. In addition, *Madany* fails to cure the deficiencies of *Fischer*.

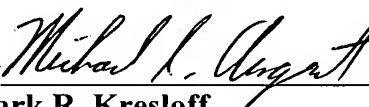
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 is patentable and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claim 9, which depends from claim 8, is also patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

The application is in a condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner believes a conversation with the Applicants’ representative would facilitate the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

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Respectfully submitted,

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